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ABSTRACT

Efforts to reform teacher education should include careful reconsideration of what teachers learn about curriculum design and instructional methodology. The selection and organization of school knowledge have significant social, political, and ethical implications that are ignored by traditional, rationalistic assumptions about educational objectivity. As different cultures shape the way their members ask questions, establish priorities, and differentiate among the elements and experiences in their lives, so the methods used to teach children shape the ways in which they assimilate, organize, and evaluate information. Schools serve different social functions and, despite the sharing of a common technical language, can incorporate widely varying values, attitudes, and concerns into tests that ostensibly reflect academic achievement. The history and culture of schooling can have a greater impact on what is taught as science, social studies, art, or literature than the practices of these disciplines themselves. Professionalization endows teaching with an authority that makes curricular traditions and institutional values even harder to modify. Social forces tend to change school curricula under the guise of neutral, abstract educational improvements. The ramifications of these observations suggest that studying the social construction and production of knowledge should be a major focus of curriculum studies. (PGD)

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CURRICULUM STUDIES, KNOWLEDGE AND INTEREST:

PROBLEMS AND PARADOXES

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CURRICULUM STUDIES, KNOWLEDGE AND INTEREST: PROBLEMS AND PARADOXES[1]

The curriculum for educating teachers has become part of the public debate about schooling. Recent federal, foundation and state reports have focused upon the organization and content of professional programs. Legislators, state departments of public instruction, university presidents, Deans of Schools of Education and teachers unions are intervening to change certification requirements at all levels of professional activity.

Most often, the responses have been instrumental. Issues of schooling and curriculum are thought related to increased administrative efficiency or organizational design to improve effectiveness. Increased time in schools or student-teaching, reduced student electives, increased grade points for admission into teacher education programs or "product" control through testing are seen as solutions to problems of program quality. The instrumental quality of the proposed reforms assumes what Marcuse

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[1]Paper prepared for American Education Research Association Annual Meeting Symposium. What is Curriculum: The Project and Its Prospects. Chicago, 1 April, 1985.

called a one dimensionality: change, progress and social reform are considered as intricately bound to the correct application of a rational organization.

The one dimensionality filters out issues of political agendas and social interests embedded in our social affairs. The acts of teaching "carries" more than questions of cognition. Children are taught how to organize social phenomena, ways of considering the legitimacy of social institutions and conceptions of "self" that have broad and profound implications. The politics of schooling evolves around not only as the public debates about desegregation, evolution or computer "literacy" but through the manner in which knowledge and social interactions are structured.

The interrelation of school knowledge with social and political issues compels us to ask about how might we think about problems of curriculum education or pedagogy.[2] What issues, dilemmas and contradictions are involved in the constructions of schooling? What are the social, political and ethical implications of the selection and organization of school knowledge? I believe these questions provide a way to consider the organization and evaluation of teacher education. The questions can be explored by focusing upon at least three concerns:

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[2]I will use the notion of pedagogy as interchangeable with curriculum. Pedagogy is used most often in European contexts to give reference to the complex relationship between teaching, learning and the contextual elements of schooling. It is that meaning that I wish to emphasize in this essay.

1. The problems and paradoxes of knowledge.
2. The institutional quality of schooling.
3. Social and cultural interests that influence school knowledge.

Some parameters to these concerns will be discussed as issues of teacher education. The concerns will be then be related to issues of the functions of the intellectual and the meaning of "rationality." The intent is to provide a method to orient teacher educators towards issues of organization and procedures. How we answer these concerns provides a way of considering the obligations of study, the interrelation of theory and practice and the problem of politics that underlies the sciences and discourses of professional life.

THE PROBLEMS AND PARADOXES OF KNOWLEDGE.

Let me begin with what might seem obvious and noncontroversial. Schools are places that deal with knowledge. By knowledge, I refer to not only the "facts" or content that becomes part of the curriculum. Underlying the words and practices of curriculum are dispositions that have the potential to fashion and shape our consciousness. Clyde Kluckhohn, an anthropologist, expressed this view of knowledge when he talked about "culture" as a word that enables us to select from the vast array of events that confront us in our everyday life. That selection, however, is not just related to the cognitive elements of life. Culture provides a way of thinking, feeling, acting and talking about the world. Thomas Kuhn, focusing upon the context of the history of science, also gives focus to the ways in which our cognitive lenses are more than "descriptions" of affairs; the perspectives of

science become elements in our interpretation and valuing of the world that confronts us.

A French school of historiography, The Annales, enables us to consider in greater depth the idea that knowledge is "more" than content or fact (see, e.g., Braudel, 1979; LeGoff, 1980). What we know, our organization of facts in our daily life, the language of our conversations and our conceptions of individuality are seen as containing a structure. The structure enables people to interpret and make plausible their participation in the world.

The structure of consciousness does not emerge from thought or ideas alone but from our historical participation in social relations. LeGoff (1980), for example, focuses upon the medieval period to understand how theologys, the development of commerce and the geographical situation interrelate with intellectual writings to produce a collective psychology and a basis for rationality. The development of a new consciousness was related to a conflict between the merchants and church's conception of time. Merchants were involved in a network of commerce. They sought to make time an object of measurement. The church, in contrast, defined time as eternal, with no temporal hiatus. As the bourgeois gained ascendency, their conception of time and space dominated the public and private space of society. Their codes of discourse came to govern perception, its exchanges, its techniques and hierarchies of practice.

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The measurement of time, a new sense of space and conception of embodiment were not just cognitive inventions. The new knowledge about the world was also knowledge about how to effect change and which elements were to be most valued. Languages of psychology, political theory and epistemology began to emerge to reflect the new perceptions of self. The new consciousness enabled people to think about the world as socially constructed and individuals as actors. The mental structures are a basis for modern science, positivism and much of our current pedagogical talk about teacher competencies, testing, academic learning time and the ideologies of progress that underlie models of school change (Popkewitz and Freedman, 1985).

The relationship between our social arrangements and consciousness would not be a problem if it was straight-forward and unidimensional. However, that is not the case. Our daily life contain different sets of values, sensitivities and awarenesses that have their origins in social struggles and transformations. Science, social science, literature and art are generally treated as asocial and apolitical endeavors. Yet each contains implicit theories of cognition, sociality, individuality and political community. In certain ways, we can see the different theories as offering tribal views in which there is controversy about the "nature" of human affairs, the role of human agency and the relation of community, work and individuality.

ART, SCIENCE AND SOCIAL INTERESTS

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We can explore the problematic quality of knowledge by considering more directly the social values that give organization to art and social science. Our "logic" tells us that art is both a matter of individual creative genius and its formal qualities, such as the use of color and shape. Contemporary society portrays images of science, as well, as formal, objective yet developed by individual imagination. Science, it is thought, is above the struggles and values of our human conditions.

In reading the history of aesthetics, art appears as social production. There is an interplay of art, general philosophical thought, institutional practices and changing cultural consciousness. Aristotle's and Plato's views of aesthetics are understood in relation to the different cosmologies that underlie their writing. Their ideas also need to be considered in relation to the political and cultural conditions of Greek society that they sought to sustain and transform. The development of the first uniquely American style of painting, Abstract Expressionism, as well, responded to social tensions and transformations. It was originally an avante-garde movement during the 1930's that sought to combine socialist commitments with urban experiences. A new ideological orientation to Abstract Expressionism developed by the 1950's with the influence of the Cold War and the movement of the production of art into the academy. A view of art was emphasized that drew upon bourgeois theories of individualism and cognition, emphasizing objective aesthetics and personal expression

(Freedman, 1985). The new ideologies were made part of the school curriculum but argued as neutral and universal theories of art.

The social sciences are also social productions, being neither neutral, disinterested or unrelated to their political context. Inquiry methods, procedures and findings contain visions of social systems and definitions of problems that are culturally located and historically formed (Popkewitz, 1984). The discourses of social science are secondary abstractions drawn from the everyday strains, tensions and conversations of the world in which scientists participate. Many of the major concepts of sociology, for example, come from literature and poetry rather than science itself (Nisbet, 1976). The concepts provide ways by which particular social groups give expression and confront the strains and contradictions of living in dynamic societies. The idea of anomie, for example, was taken from poetry to express the tensions created by industrialization among the middle class.

The methods and procedures of science are produced often in responce to particular visions of social amelioration. The modern testing and measurement industry has its origin in a political movement of eugenics to improve the quality of racial "stocks." A current school research interest in ethnography can be viewed in relation to the conflict of the 1960's (see, e.g., Popkewitz, 1984). Issues of loss of community, lack of efficacy to control one's life and the importance of pluralism were raised. The themes of ethnography reassert these beliefs through the methodological assumptions. The ethnographies provide a symbolic

means of asserting individual involvement in the larger political process.

The values underlying our science helps us to understand that there is not one notion of science but multiple traditions to understanding and interpretation. Our social sciences contain paradigms or different constellations of value, commitment, methods and procedures. One can juxtapose behavioral, marxist and phenomenological research in the various social and educational disciplines to understand the deeply rooted and conflicting cognitive interests that guide research. The research traditions offer different vantage points for focusing upon the possibilities of our social conditions.

To recognize the social embeddedness of our social sciences is to raise issues about the structure of power in our forms of rationality. The concepts, methods and procedures of a social science affirm certain values,
yet remain silent about others. While much intellectual work accepts existing traditions, some resist and some seek to reform. What values are sustained or denied remains problematic.

SOCIAL KNOWLEDGE, INTEREST AND CURRICULUM

The socially constructed quality of science raises profound and complex issues about the formation of curriculum. Our models of curriculum and teaching methods often fail to recognize that our discourses of art and science are dynamic in construction, multiple in interests and value laden. The discipline-centered curriculum movement, for example, made

the problem of instruction as creativity strategies to teach concepts as definitions of things. But to fix the findings of science ignored the debate about knowledge found in the disciplines, the manner in which the concepts are defined by various intellectual traditions and the social values that underlie the scholarly debates. For example, the concept of power in behavioral and critical traditions in political science "ask" different questions about politics and imposes different restrictions upon the claims of knowledge. Rather than exploring the various ways the social sciences interpret our social arrangements, curriculum designs crystalized the concepts and made existing arrangements seem "natural" and inevitable (Apple, 1972; Popkewitz, 1976). These curriculum designs were "carried" into teacher education through methods textbooks and practicum experiences (Popkewitz, 1983).

To select a story, a concept or a way of talking about learning or thinking is to engage in a discourse about the world. To "teach" history is to select someone's history out of the total array of possibilities. To select a concept for children to learn is to incorporate a range of prior values and interests which are expressed in the way that a concept is given definition. To offer a strategy for teaching is to pose a way in which children are to give organization to their consciousness and shape the manner by which that knowledge is to be effected. None of these choices are free of assumption or value. The discourse places value upon the disparate events that confront us in our social situation.

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The issues of knowledge in art and science provide a way of considering curriculum studies. Central to a curriculum discourse are social/philosophical and political questions about knowledge: What is knowledge? How is it made? In whose interest is knowledge selected, organized and evaluated? How can its tensions, contradictions and limitations be considered by children? I believe that in these questions lie the foundations of curriculum studies in teacher education. What knowledge is chosen and how it is organized involves profound and complex questions about our human conditions and patterns of social conduct.

THE INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY OF SCHOOLING

The social quality of knowledge leads us to consider curriculum study in relation to the institutional patterns of schooling (See, e.g., Berger and Luckmann, 1967). The knowledge developed in schooling is related to particular sets of rules, patterns of conduct and roles. It is typical only in school to accept a decorum by which conversation is controlled by the raising of hands, sitting in rows of desks and reading of standardized texts for literacy. It is also peculiar to the practices of teaching to set aside a specific time to be "creative" or to do "inquiry". The ethos of politeness and civility in schooling are more than manners or conveniences of organization. The institutional patterns of schooling have identity-forming potential through the way in which behaviors, attitudes and emotions of those who participate are channelled.

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The identity forming potential of schooling develops through the specializations and differentation in the knowledge needed to participate. Teachers "know" different things than children. Principals "understand" the context of schooling in ways that are in contrast to parents or teachers. As important, the knowledge distributed by schools varies not only by role but also by social location and cultural circumstances. While more about the distribution of school knowledge will be discussed in a latter section, it is important to note that there is not one common school but schools that are different in their social assumptions, implications and consequences.

The pecularities of school knowledge developed historically in relation to a number of social issues and pressures. Among these issues have been the use of the schools to Americanize immigrants, to create a viable democracy and to help labor selection processes. The multiple social functions of schooling produce strains and contradictions in which the actual consequences of schooling are often different than that expressed in the public language of teaching or learning.

At least three institutional dimensions can help us understand the tensions and contradictions in curriculum study: (1) achievement, competence and learning as social constructions; (2) the ways in which school patterns alter the meaning of science and other disciplined practices, and (3) professionalization as ideological practice. Often the assumptions, implications and consequences of these three dimensions of institutional life are obscured in school discourse.

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One: The meanings of learning, achievement and competence are developed in the everyday patterns of work and communication in schools. To participate in the world of schooling is to participate in a social world which maintains particular lines of reasoning, action and values. The organization of classrooms and teacher behaviors establish standards about how children should consider their personal competence and achievement. To do social studies, for example, provides students with definitions of which social problems are important, with criteria for judging the truth and validity of social statements, and with assumptions about the elements of the social world and their interrelations. The learning of schooling is to orient oneself toward situations and the appropriate form in which to cast the academic knowledge.

To understand the accomplishment of schooling is to understand how the everyday activities and discourse give definition to school life. Criteria of subject-matter learning are mediated by social interaction in which issues of gender, social class and cultural expectations held by teachers are important. Ethnographies of classrooms illustrate the manner in which social characteristics influence the nature of social interactions between teachers and children, the quality of assignments and evaluation given and the expectations placed upon the school work (Cusick, 1983; Keddie, 1971).

What is learned in schooling is made more complex as there is not one common school but different forms of schooling. The differences were

most poignantly expressed for me in a study of a elementary reform program which introduced a management program to make instruction more efficient (Popkewitz, et. al., 1982). The research focused upon the culture of six schools defined as exemplary in the reform implementation. While public language and organization projected a consistency among the different schools, the social patterns reflected different expectations, demands and definitions of pedagogy. These differences were referred to technical, constructive, and illusory schooling. I would like to explore these findings as a way of focusing upon the socially constructed quality of teaching, learning, achievement and competence.

The definition of competence in the three Technical schooling was related to administrative criteria: a teacher's ability to keep records and monitor children's pace as they moved through a prepackaged curriculum. Children's competence was overtly defined in relation to mastery of the particular behavioral objectives, though mastery was often related to a second criterion of success: Students were to look industrious in doing the school work if their efforts were to be judged worthwhile. There were no criteria of excellence or quality except related to quantity. The school called "Constructive" focused upon knowledge as problematic, children's inter and intrapersonal skills, and the integration of the arts, sciences and language arts.

Illusory schooling, two of the studied schools, had cultural patterns in which the social characteristics of the children's background was seen as pathological. The task of the school was to enforce what teachers

saw as a universal morality. The illusory quality of these schools had a double edge. Children were not being taught the subject matter of schooling. There was little teaching of reading, mathematics or language, although the formal rituals of subject-matter organization and departmentalization made it seem that the teaching was occuring. The social interactions contained messages, however, that blamed the failure to learn on the individual children rather than institutional patterns.

Rituals of homogeneity obscured the differences among the schools. Tests of achievement or competence projected an image of objectivity that made the social values seem to occur as judgments external to the life of schooling. Yet the tests are derived from notions of competence that originate in the categories, assumptions and power arrangements of schooling. The test items are built upon socially derived criteria about achievement and intelligence. The test items are mediated by classroom interactions and receive meaning within a world that involves interpretive competence (Cicourel, et. al., 1974).

The details of everyday life in these schools help us understand how the patterns of work and communication in schools transform the texts of curriculum into social texts that have identity-sustaining potential. The patterns of school work offer both a knowledge "about" and a knowledge of "how to" effect the content. The "how-to" knowledge is not the same for all children. The variations in school cultures

have significant implications to how children are to view their "self" in relation to their world.

Curriculum study, then, involves not only questions about the selection and organization of knowledge for schooling. It must also direct attention to the ways in which that knowledge is mediated and differentiated by the ongoing institutional patterns of schooling.

Two: The particular patterns of school conduct are often different in assumption from the discipline from which they draw their labels. What is taught as science, social studies, art or literature in schooling has a greater relation to the particular history and culture of schooling than to the practices of the disciplines from which the subject matter is drawn.

Science is illustrative for it is considered our most cognitive activity. The knowledge generating quality of science can be seen in relation to its communal and craft qualities.[3] All disciplines contain patterns of social interactions and communication that guide practices. These patterns create shared ways of "seeing" the world, of working and of testing each other's findings. A discipline is guided by preferred forms, a sense of appropriateness, aesthetics and conceptual structure. The norms, attitudes and dispositions, however, are not static and involve conflict and competition.

In seeming contradiction to its communal nature is the craft-like quality of science. The craft quality gives focus to the combination

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[3]The use of these metaphors for curriculum are discussed in Popkewitz (1977).

of practical skills, aesthetic feelings and conceptual order by which individual's generate scientific knowledge. In a way that a chisel becomes an extension of a sculptor's hand and imagination, the concepts and techniques of science are an extension of a researchers attempt to give meaning and imagination to the work of inquiry.

The communal organization and craft-quality of science are dialectically related. The community organization of norms and practice bestows autonomy upon the individual to develop individual imagination and craftsmanship. The ambiguity, tentativeness, playfulness as well as conflicting visions necessary for the craft quality acts back upon the communal norms and conceptual schemes in a way that alters both craft and community.

Methods of science reflects the interplay of community and craft. Concepts and techniques of science do not stand alone. They are interrelated with purposes, social visions and the existential experiences of study. The interplay of "self" and world is not one that proceeds by formal logic, hierarchy or taxonomies of tasks. There is always a critical interplay between a theorist and community, society and the phenomena of the world investigated.

In what is perhaps an irony of schooling, the models of curriculum design posit a view of science in which methods of teaching are strategies to uncover and explain an order to predetermined patterns (Popkewitz, 1983). The process of science is defined as a logically ordered set of procedures. Our psychologies of instruction assume

there are universal qualities or states that exist as external to children. Knowledge is made distinct from method. Content is unambiguous and hierarchical in quality. Thought is viewed as logical, and unrelated to culture and social conditions. The craft and communal elements of the construction of science are lost as rational procedures and abstract qualities are made objects of instruction. As one reads teacher education method textbooks, a mythic structure is offerred in place of science: The organization of content portrays an image of science as an objective activity that brings progress to society; democracy to our political system and the resolution of questions of fact and value.

Studies of curriculum need to give attention to the manner in which we borrow from the disciplined fields of inquiry. Our language and practices need to consider the relation of community, craft and knowledge. Further, teaching needs to take into account how the imperatives of the social organization of schooling deny or create possibilities related to the practices of scientific communities.

Three: A third dynamic of institutional life is the professionalization of occupational work. Everett Hughes (1958) suggests that a profession should be viewed as a special occupation licensed to act upon clients in ways not permitted by other forms of social interaction. The label "professional" is used by occupational groups to signify a highly trained, competent, specialized, and

dedicated group that is effectively and efficiently serving the public trust.

But the label "professional" is more than a declaration of public trust. It is a category that gives status and privilege to an occupational group. Professionals involve social authority built upon the recognition that a group's definitions are legitimate according to prevailing rules of society. There is also cultural authority related to assigning to the realm of meaning which particular definitions of reality and judgment prevail as valid and true.

An occupational authority lies in its claims to scientific expertise. The "helping" professions, in particular, use scientific technology and language to orient, describe and legitimate their activities. Terms used to describe mental illness, forms of delinquency or educational capabilities imply scientific knowledge and justify professional actions.

The idea that science provides the professions with moral authority has both formal and public qualities. The formal language calls attention to an image of inner control, respect for rules and proven experiences. The public language of science occurs through the introduction of the concepts and generalizations into the events of schooling, helping to create beliefs about the nature, causes, consequences and remedies of institutional practices. To talk of diagnosis, to give a technical name (dyslexia) to a child's inability to read, or to prescribe a behavior modification for a child who does not behave has a symbolic effect: they imply that the causes of the problem are known, and that

all that is needed is the correct treatment. The use of technical language, specialization and hierarchical ranking of school personal tend to separate the initiated from the uninitiated. Teaching is made to seem professional, that is, esoteric, technical in purpose, and not amenable to outside influence.

An important element of the sciences of teaching and learning is the interjection of therapeutic languages. The languages of the therapy are part of the public and political context of schooling. The languages justifies the status, power and authority of professions. Attention is concentrated on procedures within the institution and failure is rationalized in advance (Edelman, 1977). The application of deviant categories depends more upon the social situation and values in the school than it does upon any perceived objectively defined criteria. Often, the categories involve highly unreliable diagnoses and prescriptions.

Professionalization often poses contradictions: By shaping clients' understanding of their experience, techniques of social manipulation are introduced into professional activity that influence moral conduct and direction of will. Professional knowledge rationalizes experience and offers categories by which to examine one's "self" in relation to others. While the purpose of professional knowledge is to introduce social and personal autonomy, a form of dependency is introduced as people are to rely on professionals to define and solve their problems.

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Some authors have argued that the culture of professionalism may have consequences for the capacity of individuals to provide for themselves (Lasch, 1977; Bledstein, 1976, 1976). Individual ability and personal competence have been progressively diminished through schemes controlled, disseminated, and evaluated by particular occupational groups. To help its clients, for example, the teaching profession is faced with the necessity of identifying classes of needy or deficient persons to serve. Thus, reading readiness produces unreadiness, computer literacy has unliteracy, and so on. Professional practice creates a contradiction between helping the deficient and maintaining a pool of deficient subjects to help.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INTERESTS IN SCHOOLING

The previous discussion highlighted certain political dimensions of schooling. The politics of curriculum is not one of brute force or power. It is the ways in which ideas and sensibilities of particular groups in society are made dominant in schooling, the range of debate that exists at any one time about that hegemony, and the ways in which these larger debates and struggles filter into and influence pedagogy.

The history of pedagogical debates reflects the relationship between school, society and consciousness. What is defined as school knowledge reflects interest that have power to structure definitions and communication patterns available in a society. Erasmus, Rousseau, Tolstoy, and more

recently, Dewey and Bruner, at different historical times, locate the arguments of schooling in broader issues of socio-cultural transmission, transformation and the moral character of the society. Durkheim (1936/1977), for example, focused upon the development of the French secondary school as involving an interplay of Christian purpose, secular developments of the State and bourgeoisie, and factors of geography. He argues that the reformation and counter reformation developed "individualized" pedagogies to mold character. The pedagogies responded to beliefs of those in the larger society who sought to exercise power through the formation of consciousness. The idea of a "classroom system", as well, was related to the issues and struggles of the Scottish Enlightenment (Hamilton, 1980). Pedagogy formed in relation to philosophical, economic and social practices of the time. The class, like the factory, was to be systematically organized and controlled in ways similar to the organization of material life by science and technology. The basis of the classroom system was a moral economy, drawn from the ideas of the political economy of Adam Smith but modified by the social conditions and circumstances of change occuring in 18th century Scotland.

The relation of our contemporary school to culture and society has a particular complexity embedded in its construction. Our world is differentiated by, among others, class, ethnicity, gender and religion. Differences are not presented in the form of carefully articulated arguments or forcefully documented concerns. Cultural expectations provide background

assumptions that are absorbed into the discourse of school in a variety of ways. Teachers' perceptions of a community's lifestyle, patterns of school work and selection of curriculum content mediate the conditions and dispositions related to larger social and cultural patterns. Technical, constructive and illusory schooling, discussed earlier, were plausible in relation to the social, cultural and geographic and religious elements of their communities.

What is taught as teaching methods or criteria of student learning are categories that are mediated by larger social and cultural power relations. The schools take the experiences and expectations of particular groups and refocus them through abstractions that make the categories seem a universal part of the education of all in society. Theories of learning and teaching, for example, are based upon the conceptions of time, space and embodiment that emerge from bourgeois experience. Time is a commodity that is logical, can be rationalized, "spent" put into distinct relations with elements of space. Providing special help for children also emerges from power relations. The category of learning disability, Sleeter (1985) argues, was created in the 1960's to distinguish middle class children from that of other special education categories for the children of the poor and racial minorities. She hypothesizes that the category of learning disabilities emerges to help the middle class prepare their children for the "new" science and mathematics curriculum that was becoming important to school success.

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A condition of professional discourse is to hide the social assumptions of schooling. The recent proposals for teacher educational reforms, for example, maintain a public language that obscures the social interests that are actually represented. Requests for university/school collaborations the effort to introduce minimum competencies and admission criteria and changes in course content represents a ten year trend of increased power by |State educational authorities. The increased control and standardization is labelled, however, local control.

Computer literacy, a major slogan of the current discourse, suggests that the school is preparing children for the new worlds of science and technological innovation. The innovations are seemingly neutral yet holding the promise of a better life. Computer literacy "makes sense" if we focus upon an emerging meaning of science and technology. Three social trends make the idea of computer literacy plausible. One is the drastic increase in industrial and military R&D since the last years of the Carter administration. The idea of "science-for-its-own-sake" has been devalued and replaced by a more limited notion. Science is seen as a commodity, its products are to be related to the profit-motive of industry (Dickson, 1984). Two is the commodification of schooling itself. Schools are multi-billion dollar commercial markets. Computer companies have engaged in a large scale effort to introduce the technologies into classrooms. Three is a general cultural belief that change can be brought about instantly. For many in schooling, computer

literacy is related to a computer "revolution" that will bring the millennial.

What is socially significant about the current reforms is the manner in which the symbols of change obscure the political interests served. Concerns with equity and excellence are replaced with a singular call for excellence. The notion of excellence assumes an objective knowledge and differences based solely upon individual effort and merit. The discussion about "excellence" hides the ways in which the experiences of particular groups in society are given advantage through the development of particular dispositions, tastes, sensitivities and awareness. In particular, the dispositions provided by middle class groups make it more likely that these groups will be able to take advantage of the "opportunities" provided by school in ways that others cannot - Bourdieu called the advantage "cultural capital". The current reforms in schooling and teacher education decontextualize the nature of science and technology to be taught by refocusing the problem as one of a universal, abstract quality of computer literacy. The discourse obscures economic interests that provide direction to the reform proposals. The proliferation of computer literacy courses in teacher education makes the practices seem neutral yet productive towards school reform.

How different cultural knowledge is established in pedagogy and the manner in which it is modified and transformed through school practice is itself subject to debate and needs to be considered as part of curriculum

studies in teacher education. The decontextualization and reformulation of school experience as abstract categories of learning, teaching or computer literacy dulls our sensitivities to the manner in which the social constructions of schooling favor and handicap certain interests in society. In significant ways, methods of teaching, theories of instruction and practices of student teaching are part of a discourse that responds to tensions and power arrangements underlying our social conditions.

A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE AND THE PROBLEM OF PRACTICE

My concern in this essay is to suggest an orientation to the discourse of curriculum studies and teacher education. It has focused upon a method to approach the organization of teaching and the issues of learning. I have used the notion of pedagogy to give focus to the complexities of occupational practices. Skills, practices and methods of teaching should emerge in relation to efforts to consider questions about the social construction and production of knowledge.

The discussion reflects my belief in a critical quality to scholarship. My usage of "critical" goes beyond a concern with understanding the internal logic and consistency in an argument, methods, or findings. Critical gives reference to an intellectual outlook and tradition that has its origin in the development of 19th century European social science. The problematic quality involves interrelating questions of social philosophy with politics, history

and "unmasking" motifs of social inquiry, such as found in the sociology of knowledge and marxism. Critical means moving outside the assumptions and practices of the existing order. It is a struggle against our cultural givens. The categories, assumptions and practices of everyday life of an institution and its professionals are to be made problematic.

The argument for a critical view to curriculum studies poses a way of approaching the relation of theory and practice. Knowledge about schooling should provide a way of considering the constraints and possibilities of our pedagogical situation. Our world is continually offered as one of ready-made customs, traditions and order-to-the-things of daily life. Yet, the natural order is not natural or inevitable, but constructed historically, socially and with political interest. Professional education should enable us to consider the possibilities of our social conditions by making fragile, to some extent, the causality in which we live. To make our social situation problematic, not as an order of things but as outcomes of the collective actions of men and women, is to make these situations potentally alterable and amenable to human agency. It is out of such consideration that methods of teaching, student-teaching and the common places of schooling need to be framed and an order to professional education shaped.

THE SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE INTELLECTUAL AND THE PROBLEM OF PRACTICE

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The obligation of study has two further qualities. There is a concern for the social function of the intellectual. The notion of "intellectual" directs us to consider the central role of teachers in creating forms of reasoning that enable students to work towards an integrity in practice. The education of teachers should involve a self-reflective stance to the role of "science" and the social position of those who serve as the "intellectuals" of schooling.

Alvin Gouldner (1979) focused upon the contradictory quality of the intellectual. The work of intellectuals seems to be transcendent, having no boundary of time or place. This characteristic of inquiry can help to unmask the pretentions, deceptions and self-deceptions that fashion our existence. Yet a social scientist's work is also socially located. The discourse of science provides symbolic canopies that can serve tradition, legitimate existing social relations and maintain power structures. This contradictory quality of intellectual life is inherent in the work of educational researchers, curriculum workers and teachers, and cannot be
ignored.

I believe the consideration of the social function of the intellectual provides a way of further broaching the relation of theory and practice. Practice, in this context, refers not as much to the ongoing relations of schooling itself but to inquiry as a form of practice. Intellectuals have historically affiliated with political and social movements, although their relationship to social movements are obscured by ideologies of

disinterest found in contemporary sciences (Offe, 1981; Gouldner, 1979). How pedagogical research responds to larger social movements and the ways in which curriculum "theories" are realized in ongoing power relations are central features of the problem of theory/practice.

A second concern of the intellectual is the problem of rationality. There is no one method for "being rational". Our contemporary situation seems to offer us a pluralism of rationalities by which to "make sense" of our daily life. Yet, one dominates in American social and intellectual life. It is one that is instrumental in focus, giving attention to administration, procedures and efficiency as criteria of change and progress.

An instrumental rationality assumes there is a common framework of experience for all people. The problem of social affairs is to identify the most appropriate means towards defined goals. The instrumentality of culture is embedded in our behavioral and cognitive models of teaching, learning and evaluation.

An instrumental discourse is inadequate to the tasks of understanding schooling or teacher education. The language of systems of instruction, models of teaching or competencies flatten the reality of schooling. The values and interests that underlie pedagogy are obscured and the power relations made to seem natural and legitimate.

Not understanding administrative problems as existing within contexts of power and authority removes from scrutiny the social assumptions and implications of professional actions. We need to recognize that all

practice contains implicit epistemologies. Facts exist only in relation to some general theory which enable us to make phenomena interpretable. Further, without a method of understanding how behaviors are structured within culture and social interest leaves us with no guiding theory and undisciplined practice. Our conventional dicotomies of theory and practice or the liberal and technical mystify the existing social and power relations in schooling. The technical and practical are intricately bound to the norms, values and ideologies of our situation.

A multiplicity of perspectives is important when we recognize intellectual traditions as socially constructed and containing interest. Each provides a vantage point for considering the complexities of our human conditions. When practiced well, the different intellectual traditions or paradigms can enable us to "see" and think about various elements of our social world in ways that can increase our understanding of the whole. The problem of contemporary research is not a lack of a single paradigm to guide inquiry or, as some would say, the youth of the endeavor to collect data. Rather, it is what Feyerabend focused upon when he spoke of professionalized incompetence; that is, the tendency to reify knowledge, to make procedures central to inquiry, and to deny the relation of science to history. A consequence is to produce "professionals" who profess efficiency and rigor but who obscure the profound and complex quality of our human conditions.

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